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Office of
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Major News Releases and Speeches

April 29 - May 6, 1983

Corrected List of Content

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News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

USDA PROPOSES CHANGES IN GRADE STANDARDS FOR GRAPEFRUIT JUICE

WASHINGTON, May 2—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing changes in the U.S. grade standards for grapefruit juice to promote efficient marketing of the product.

Charles Brader, a marketing official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said major segments of the citrus industry asked USDA to develop the proposal.

The current standards for frozen concentrated grapefruit juice allow a dilution ratio of only three parts water to one part concentrate. Since some processors of frozen concentrated juice market a product that has a higher concentration, the proposal would provide for additional dilution ratios.

The proposal also would change from 9 percent to 10 percent the soluble solids requirement for grapefruit juice from concentrate. Brader said this action would align the grade standards with the Food and Drug Administration's standards of identity.

The proposal is scheduled to be published in the May 3 Federal Register, available at many public libraries. Written comments should be sent in duplicate by July 5 to the Hearing Clerk, rm. 1077-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

The Agricultural Marketing Service establishes grade standards and provides official grading for many food products. Use of the grading service is voluntary and paid for by the user.

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MAY 31 IS DEADLINE TO APPLY TO NOMINATE WHEAT INDUSTRY COUNCIL MEMBERS

WASHINGTON, May 2—Consumer and industry organizations who want to nominate individuals to the Wheat Industry Council must apply to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for certification by May 31.

Thomas H. Porter, an official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said organizations must apply and be certified before they can nominate individuals to council positions. After the organizations are certified, USDA will ask for nominations to fill the two-year terms of 10 members and their alternates whose terms will expire early in 1984. Half the membership on the council is replaced each year.

Porter said organizations that are already certified do not need to reapply. In early summer certified organizations will receive information on the nomination process by mail.

The 20-member council administers a national research and nutrition education program for wheat and wheat foods. Membership is composed equally of wheat producers, processors, end-product manufacturers and consumers.

Applications and information on eligibility for certification can be obtained from Lowry Mann, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2610-S, Washington, D.C., 20250. Telephone: (202) 447-2650.

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USDA RESTRICTS HORSE IMPORTS FROM ITALY BECAUSE OF HORSE DISEASE

WASHINGTON, May 3—U.S. Department of Agriculture officials have again imposed restrictions on the importation of horses from Italy because of contagious equine metritis, a venereal disease of horses.

John K. Atwell, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said Italian officials reported finding the disease in three mares. Test results on these mares were confirmed March 28.

USDA had removed Italy from the list of countries affected by the disease Dec. 9, 1982, based on information that indicated that the disease did not exist in Italy.

Atwell said the restrictions will affect only mares and stallions of breeding age. To be eligible for entry into the United States, animals over two years of age must undergo specific prophylactic treatments and tests in the country of origin, at USDA import quarantine stations and on premises specifically designated for state quarantine.

Since discovery of this bacterial disease in 1977, the United States has imposed restrictions on horse imports from 11 countries. They are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Japan, West Germany, France, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Notice of this action is scheduled for publication in the May 3 Federal Register.

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USDA EXPANDS LIST OF RESTRICTED FOREIGN WEEDS

WASHINGTON, May 4—U.S. Department of Agriculture officials have expanded the list for foreign noxious weeds prohibited from entering the United States except under special permit.

James Lackey, a botanist with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said this action greatly expands the number of foreign weeds restricted—from 65 to 357—under USDA regulations implementing the Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974.

Lackey said the added species include eight species of aquatic weeds. Newly listed parasitic weeds include all species of Cuscuta (dodders) and Orobanche (broomrapes) except for designated domestic species. Forty-five types of terrestrial weeds also are restricted, including 25 species of Prosopis (mesquite).

These additions to the list of foreign noxious weeds were proposed in October 1981. APHIS officials held a public hearing and reviewed written comments. On the basis of this public comment and a review of scientific literature, the proposal has been adopted without change.

Notice of this action, with a listing of all restricted noxious weeds, is scheduled for publication in the May 4 Federal Register.

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USDA UPDATES 1983 ACREAGE REDUCTION PROGRAMS REPORT

WASHINGTON, May 4—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today released updated enrollment data on its 1983 acreage reduction and payment-in-kind (PIK) programs.

While the updated information is not significantly changed from that announced as preliminary March 22, the revision is the result of county offices of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service checking and correcting as necessary figures originally submitted shortly after completion of a heavy program signup period.

Today's report shows an additional 658,032 acres earmarked for required conservation use for a total of 82,952,056 under the acreage reduction and PIK programs.

The 187.5 million acres enrolled in the upland cotton, feed grain, rice and wheat programs represents 81.1 percent of the 231 million acres of total base acreage. Base acreage enrolled includes 90.6 million under the feed grain program, 78.4 million under the wheat program, 14.6 million under the upland cotton program and 3.9 million under the rice program.

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USDA REVISES COUNTRY, COMMODITY PUBLIC LAW 480 ALLOCATIONS FOR FISCAL 1983

WASHINGTON, May 4—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued its revised country and commodity allocations for fiscal 1983 under Titles I and III of Public Law 480 (the Food for Peace program).

According to Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Alan T. Tracy, current program plans provide for distribution of $783.5 million in commodity shipments, up slightly from the previous quarter. Of this amount, $756.2 million is allocated and $27.3 million is being held in a reserve to meet emergency situations and provide additional assistance to countries with fiscal 1983 programs. Food aid shipments are presently expected to total about 4.1 million metric tons.

Tracy said USDA added dry edible beans to the table; increased country allocations for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guinea, Honduras,

Indonesia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Sudan and made minor quantity changes for some countries.

The revised allocations meet the legal requirement that at least 75 percent of food aid commodities be allocated to friendly countries meeting the International Development Association poverty criterion—currently those with an annual per capita income of $795 or less. Eighty percent of Titles I and III planned commodity shipments are allocated to countries in this category.

Among other factors, Tracy said, the program takes into account variations in commodity and budget availabilities in the United States and in participating countries; changing economic and foreign policy situations; potential for market development; fluctuations in commodity prices; availability of handling, storage and distribution facilities; and possible disincentives to local production.

Except for agreements already signed, the country and commodity allocations announced do not represent final U.S. government commitments. Each program must still be reviewed and approved prior to negotiations with individual recipient countries before final U.S. government agreements are signed, Tracy said.

Title I of P.L. 480 is a concessional sales program designed to promote exports of agricultural commodities from the United States and to foster economic development in recipient countries. The program provides loans of up to 40 years, with a grace period of up to 10 years and low interest rates.

Title III provides for the forgiveness of the debt incurred under Title I, based on accomplishments in food for development programs and projects agreed upon by the United States and recipient countries.

Additional technical information on the P.L. 480 program is available from Mary Chambliss of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, (202) 447-3573.

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USDA SPEEDS PROCEDURE FOR CONFIRMING NITROSAMINES IN BACON

WASHINGTON, May 4—Beginning June 6, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will use a new laboratory procedure that reduces from eight to four working days the time needed to confirm nitrosamine levels in bacon.

"The new procedure reduces costs by speeding the test procedure and using less labor than the present method but it provides comparable results," said Donald L. Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Houston said the new procedure, called the "low temperature vacuum distillation method," is used to extract nitrosamines from fried bacon samples prior to confirmation testing.

"In testing the bacon, USDA laboratories perform a preliminary analysis of nitrosamine levels using the thermal energy analyzer. If this test indicates potential violative levels, the department is required to collect and analyze additional samples. Confirmation testing is done by the combined methods of gas chromatography and mass spectrometry 21 days after sample collection to approximate the time lag between bacon production and consumption," Houston said.

A notice announcing the change in methodology is scheduled to be published in the May 5 Federal Register.

A description of the new method and additional information is available from Richard L. Ellis, Director, Chemistry Division, Science Program, FSIS, USDA, Room 404 Annex, Washington, D.C. 20250, phone (202) 447-7623.

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14 NON-USDA LABORATORIES APPROVED FOR CEM TESTING

WASHINGTON, May 5—A U.S. Department of Agriculture official has approved 14 non-USDA laboratories to run contagious equine metritis—CEM -tests on imported horses.

John K. Atwell, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said the laboratories are in California,

Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Virginia. They are authorized to perform diagnostic tests for the disease under USDA quarantine regulations.

"This action reduces the expense and difficulty of submitting test samples within the 48-hour minimum required for valid diagnostic testing," Atwell said.

Previously, testing for horses imported from countries affected with this disease was authorized only at the USDA National Veterinary Service Laboratories at Ames, Iowa. Atwell said veterinarians sometimes experienced difficulty in getting samples to the laboratory in time.

This change in federal animal health regulations also clarifies the procedures for testing and quarantining horses imported from countries affected with contagious equine metritis.

Public comments on this action will be accepted through July 5 by the deputy administrator for veterinary services, APHIS, USDA, Room 870 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, Md., 20782. The regulations are scheduled to be published in the May 6 Federal Register.

Addresses for the laboratories are:

CALIFORNIA:
Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital
Microbiology Service
University of California
Davis, Calif. 95616 (916) 752-1156

NEW YORK:
Diagnostic Laboratory
New York State College of
Veterinary Medicine
P.O. Box 786
Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

Addresses for the laboratories—*continued*

COLORADO:
Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colo. (303) 221-4630

ILLINOIS:
Animal Disease Laboratory
235 North Walnut
P.O. Box 587
Centralia, Ill. 62801 (618) 532-6701

KENTUCKY:
Murray State University Diagnostic and Research Center
P.O. Box 2000, North Drive
Hopkinsville, Ky. 42240

University of Kentucky Livestock Disease Diagnostic Center
1429 Newton Pike
Lexington, Ky. 40511

MARYLAND:
Animal Health Laboratory
4901 Calvert Rd.
College Park, Md. (301) 454-3631

NEW JERSEY:
New Jersey Department of Agriculture Diagnostic Laboratory
Division of Animal Health
John Fitch Plaza, Rm. 201, CN-330
Trenton, N.J. 08625
(609) 984-2250

NORTH CAROLINA:
Rollins Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory
2101 Blueridge Rd.
Box 12223 Cameron Village Station
Raleigh, N.C. 27605

OHIO:
Ohio Department of Agriculture
Division of Animal Industry
Pathological Service Laboratory
8995 E. Main St.
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068
(614) 866-6361

OKLAHOMA:
Oklahoma Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory

Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Okla. 74078
(405) 624-6623

TENNESSEE:
C.E. Kord Animal Disease Laboratory
Ellington Agricultural Center
Hogan Road
Nashville, Tenn. 37204

VIRGINIA:
Richmond Regulatory Laboratory
1 North 14th St.
Richmond, Va. 23219

Warrenton Regulatory Laboratory
234 Shirley Ave.
Warrenton, Va. 22186

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USDA REVISES NORMAL OPERATING SCHEDULE FOR POULTRY AND EGG PLANTS

WASHINGTON, May 5—The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that it is revising its definition of the normal operating schedule for plants using its voluntary poultry and egg grading services and the egg products inspection service.

H. Connor Kennett, a poultry official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the new definition will make the normal operating schedule more flexible by accommodating the workweek of certain plants which routinely operate on Sundays.

Under current regulations, a plant's normal operating schedule for poultry and egg grading purposes must consist of a continuous eight hour day—excluding lunch—on five consecutive days per week, between Monday and Saturday. The regulations prohibit Sunday from being scheduled as a regular workday, even though some poultry and egg plants regularly operate on a Sunday through Thursday schedule.

Kennett said plants participating in the voluntary poultry and egg grading programs are charged a fee approximately equal to the cost of providing the services, but higher charges result when USDA's official workweek differs from that of the plants.

"For those facilities, our regulations are unduly restrictive," he said. "Plants working on Sunday in lieu of a regularly scheduled workday must pay for the scheduled day not worked plus an overtime rate for the Sunday service."

Under the new rules, Sunday may be established as part of the normal operating schedule for such facilities. USDA will charge these plants a Sunday differential rate rather than overtime, but they will no longer have to pay for a day not worked since their workweeks will comply with USDA regulations.

Plants receive egg products inspection services free of charge because the program is mandatory, but only for that portion of a plant's workweek which corresponds to USDA's Monday through Saturday schedule. Redefining its normal operating schedule will eliminate the charge for Sunday inspection service if Sunday is part of a plant's regular workweek.

Kennett said the change is a final rule amending the regulations for administering the voluntary egg products inspection program; the egg,

poultry, and rabbit grading programs; and the mandatory egg products inspection program, effective July 1.

The final rule is scheduled to be published in the May 9 Federal Register, which is available at many public libraries.

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CCC DONATES DAIRY PRODUCTS TO POLAND

WASHINGTON, May 5—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation has donated 3,969,000 pounds of dairy products to the World Vision Relief Organization for distribution to needy persons in Poland, according to Richard E. Lyng, deputy secretary of agriculture

The dairy products include 1.323 million pounds of nonfat dry milk, 1.323 million pounds of cheddar cheese and 1.323 million pounds of butter. The products will be given to some 200,000 elderly persons who lack pensions, the ill and disabled who lack access to social services, and to those people experiencing severe food shortages due to living standards below acceptable norms.

This is the ninth program under recent legislation which amended Section 416 of the Agricultural Act of 1949 to allow the CCC to donate its surplus dairy products to help needy people overseas. This section also authorized domestic donations of these dairy products to help needy Americans.

This brings total value of food assistance to Poland under the Public Law 480 Title II food assistance program and Section 416 dairy donation program in fiscal 1983 to an estimated $51.2 million, Lyng said.

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USDA REPORTS CORN, SORGHUM, WHEAT QUANTITIES UNDER PIK PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, May 4—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today reported the quantities of corn, sorghum and wheat which farmers may

receive for participating in the 1983 payment-in-kind program. As an inducement to reduce crop acreages of certain commodities under the PIK program, growers were offered commodity in-kind payments.

Also reported today by USDA are the stocks available for PIK payments held in the current Commodity Credit Corporation inventory and the additional inventory obtained by CCC during the acquisition program April 4-15.

According to CCC Executive Vice President Everett Rank, corn producers will be provided approximately 1.76 billion bushels. They will receive 818.2 million bushels of corn currently pledged as collateral for outstanding regular and farmer-owned reserve loans and 946.2 million bushels from CCC inventory—made up of 473.8 million bushels in current inventory and 760.8 million bushels acquired through the April 4-15 offers.

For corn, CCC accepted all offers of bids not exceeding 20 percent. The average bid accepted permitted the borrower to retain 14.94 percent of the collateral offered for sale to CCC, Rank said.

Wheat producers will be provided approximately 548.6 million bushels, including 233.1 million currently pledged as collateral for outstanding price support loans, and 315.5 million of other wheat from CCC inventory, he said.

There are 182.3 million bushels of wheat in the current CCC inventory and CCC acquired an additional 223 million bushels for its inventory in April by accepting offers with bids not exceeding 20 percent for 1982-crop wheat and 25 percent for older crops. The average bid accepted was 14.22 percent.

Sorghum producers will be provided approximately 114.2 million hundredweight—48.0 million currently pledged as collateral for outstanding price support loans and 66.2 million hundredweight of other sorghum from CCC inventories.

There are 26.1 million hundredweight of sorghum in current CCC inventory and 82.7 million acquired by the corporation from loan quantities offered April 4-15. For sorghum, CCC accepted all offers of bids not exceeding 20 percent, with the average bid accepted as 13.75 percent.

The quantity of cotton and rice which farmers may receive for participating in PIK will be reported later, Rank said.

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USDA MAKES OFFERS TO WHEAT PRODUCERS

WASHINGTON, May 5—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will accept offers from wheat farmers to make available their 1983 crop production for payment-in-kind purposes, since USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation does not have sufficient quantities of other wheat in inventory which can be made available to all producers for PIK.

Everett Rank, CCC's executive vice president, said offers will only be accepted from farmers who have no wheat or insufficient quantities of wheat pledged as collateral which can be redeemed and sold to CCC for PIK purposes. CCC has the option of requiring PIK participants to obtain loans on their 1983 production. Some farmers have indicated a preference to receive PIK compensation from their 1983 production.

CCC will accept offers from wheat producers through May 27. CCC reserves the right to accept or reject any offers from producers who assigned their PIK to warehousemen by May 1, Rank said.

CCC will develop special provisions that will permit farmers to use their 1983 production for PIK even though they do not have warehouse or on-farm storage available.

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BLENDED CREDIT APPROVED FOR TUNISIA

WASHINGTON, May 5—A blended credit package of $61.5 million for Tunisia was announced today by Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Richard E. Lyng.

Lyng noted that Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block and a market development team visited Tunisia in March.

The sale to Tunisia consisted of $50 million worth of wheat, $6 million of corn, $5.3 million of dairy heifers and $200,000 of semen.

"There is considerable market development opportunity for U.S. agricultural commodities in Tunisia," Lyng said. "Development projects in Tunisia present an opportunity to develop markets for U.S. holstein heifers and semen as well as expanding markets for U.S. corn and soybean meal."

He said the credit for wheat should offset current foreign exchange constraints and permit Tunisia to achieve a higher level of wheat imports this year, both in total and from the United States. It will also help U.S. wheat to meet continuing strong competition, especially from origins that subsidize their wheat exports.

Under the Commodity Credit Corporation blended credit program, interest-free direct credits under the export credit sales program are blended with government-guaranteed bank credits under the export credit guarantee program.

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Backgrounder

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES AND VOLUNTARISM IN THE USDA

Agriculture Secretary John R. Block signed a memorandum on May 4, 1983 which directs USDA agencies to expand, where possible, the voluntary role of the private sector in implementing agency programs.

The memorandum is an outgrowth of a provision supported by the Department in the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. It enhanced the secretary's authority to use volunteers in carrying out USDA missions and strengthening state and local roles in the application of its programs. The legislation directed that the voluntarism not be used to displace Department employees.

Historically, private sector voluntarism has played a significant, if not crucial, role in the effectiveness of USDA's services and programs. The Department, with a network of grassroots offices throughout the country, depends on cooperation and participation at the state and local level.

While most USDA agencies use volunteers, the Forest Service and Extension Service, by the nature of the services they provide, have the most visual volunteer network. Forest Service voluntarism ranges from cleaning campgrounds to programming computers. Extension utilizes voluntarism in its 4-H program, Homemakers program and in its activities involving Agriculture, Natural Resources and Community and Rural Development.

The Forest Service more than doubled the number of volunteers working with its programs since 1981. The agency hopes to triple the original size of the volunteer effort by the end of 1984. In 1982, the work accomplished by 42,000 Forest Service volunteers was valued at $15 million.

Extension Service estimates that the 183 million volunteer hours contributed to its programs are equal to a $1.5 billion annual contribution.

Several examples of general areas in which USDA has worked effectively with the private sector include:

— implementing rural development strategies,
— promoting agricultural commodities in overseas markets,
— introducing knowledge about agriculture into school curricula,
— planning conservation measures with farmers,
— collecting and providing data on planting and harvesting.

One particular volunteer earned the 1983 Presidential Volunteer Action Award. Thomas W. Dibblee, Jr. who, as a volunteer mapper on the Los Padres National Forest in California, completed a geological map of the forest. His work was valued at more than $500,000.

The Working Group on Private Sector Initiatives and Voluntarism, under the Secretary's Policy and Coordination Council, oversees the progress of volunteer participation in the Department. More information on private sector initiatives and voluntarism at USDA can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Secretary/Public Liaison at (202) 447-2798.

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